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ABSTRACT

Based on the assumption that the content and symbolism of nursery rhymes reflect the particular needs of those who respond to them, this paper analyzes Mother Goose rhymes in relation to the psychological stages of child development. Each basic need of the child, as defined in Bruno Bettelheim's "The Uses of Enchantment," is applied to specific British-rooted nursery rhymes and discussed with regard to symbolic meaning. The following symbols are discussed as they relate to human nature, needs, and sexuality: the unending supply of food, spiders and frogs, greed, hens and eggs, cows, falling, animals and birds, and the fiddle. The paper concludes with a brief consideration of popular music that contains Mother Goose symbolism. (MAI)

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HOW CONTENT AND SYMBOLISM IN MOTHER GOOSE MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD'S INTEGRATED PSYCHE

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Independent Study
for
Dr. Weber

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For many years it has riddled me, "What lies in the content of Mother Goose rhymes that are so satisying to basic human needs that seemingly nonsensical rhymes survive centuries of cultural change?" Many before more have questioned the meaning of these little ditties. To see exactly how far one could go in trying to make an interpretation, one should consult L. Frank Baum's Mother Goose in Prose in which the author's imagination weaves fantastic stories to fit a rhyme. On the other hand, there nave been very scholarly historical studies of the meaning of the English nursery rhyme. But it does not concern me if the true meanings of theses "melodies" are related to Mary, Queen of Scots (as K. A. Lewes asserts)(Wm. Baring-Gould) or Indo-European myths, for I only question their staying power and not their origin. It is for this reason that I have studied the content of Mother Goose in relation to the basic psychological stages of human development. I have studied the use of symbolism and have noted similar symbolism that is being used in contemporary literature and art. My own curiosity has been satisfied as to a meaning for:

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon
The little dog laughed to see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

What are Earliest Stages of Human Development?

If one consults a basic text on Child Development (Hurlock) to a deep psychological study (Bettelheim), one finds fundamental agreement as to the fundamental stages of growth. Babies are totally dependent upon others, which is as the infant sees it, a total dependence on its mother. (Hurlock, 27) It sees its most urgent needs as being oral and mother is there to satisy this. Bettelheim tells us that this period ends when the child realizes that the "unending supply of love and nutriment prove to be an irrealistic fantasy." (Bettelheim, 187)

How does Mother Goose deal with Fears aroused by Realization that Unending Supply of Love and Nutriment is a Fantasy?

Because food is such a basic part of our lives, it would be difficult to say that all nursery rhymes that deal with eating relate to the child's fears and resentments of the loss of the "Unending Supply." Many of the food-related rhymes relate to babies such as "Pat-a Cake" where cake is requested for"baby and me" and

> Baby and I were baked in a pie
> The gravy was wonderful hot
> We had nothing to pay to the baker that day
> And so we crept out of the pot. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 175)

or to characters termed "little" such as "little Jack Horner." Another indication that eating is the earliest concern is "Little Jack Dandy Pratt," the first suitor who carried the dish and the spoon.

The realization that the unending supply of food may indeed end might be expressed in the extremely popular rhyme about "Little Miss Muffet" who was frightened from her food by a poor spider. There are not a large number of spiders in Mother Goose but from what one can see the spider is a simple animal that gets eaten by frogs (William Baring-Gould, 89) or thrown up and down stairs (Wm. Baring-Gould, 62). The most famous nursery rhyme spider is of course Eency, Weency (or Inky, dinky if you prefer) who was not only brave enough to go up a water spout, but bold enough to reclimb once he had been knocked down.

It is for this reason that I feel that the spider in "Little Miss Muffet" may only appear to show her that she must go out or "up" into the world herself.

There is, as Bettelheim points out (Bettelheim, 95, 144), a resentment toward one's mother for withdrawing total support as well as a resentment from the mother toward the child whose new efforts at self-assertion disturb her. The child now sees his mother as a somewhat cruel witch who deserves the same punishment(in this case starvation) that the child has seen himself threatened with. "All children have murdrous wishes" (Bettelheim, 122) but parents can't accept these feelings of their children particularly the ambivalent feelings that children have towards their parents. (Bettelheim, 123) Parents do not permit their children literature that openly expresses murdrous wishes toward parents so such wishes must be disguised in the literature. Bettelheim tells us in fairy tales the resented mother is seen as a witch or stepmother. (Bettelheim, 122) In Mother Goose we see no witches or stepmothers but there is a multitude of old women. In The Annotatated Mother Goose there are 27 separate rhymes about old women. As Sackville-West points out, the nursery rhymes are "full of old women, nearly all unfortunate, mainly bringing their misfortunes on themselves." (Sackville-West, 9) Such old women "crawled out of corners, searched their cupboards, wore cork legs that surprisingly sunk into water,"(Sackville-West, 9) and lost their sons and their cows. It seems possible that children have identified their angry wishes towards their mother in the guise of old women rhymes. Since the young child is very resentful that his mother has cut offthe "unending supply of nutriment" it seems reasonable that the punishment she most doserves is that of starvation. Perhaps this is why the starvation rhymes of old women are so popular. There was "Old Mother Hubbard" who didn't even have a bone for her dog, "The old woman who lived in a shoe" who had only broth to feed her children(Wm. Baring-Gould, 88), and the "old lady all skin and bone"(Wm. Baring-Gould, 86)

On the other hand, the child hopes that he will grow to independence where he can get his own food. Jack Sprat and his wife have just what they want and his Mrs. is able to make him any foodstuff he desires.

Bettelheim tells us"that to become a king or a queen at the end of a story symbolizes true independence"(Bettelheim, 127) and this definitely holds for Mother Goose. It is then natural that rhymes about having lots to eat are attributed to kings and queens. An example of this is "When Good King Arthur Ruled this Land" where the king and queen bought 3 pecks of barley meal that they stuffed themselves with, and what they couldn't stuff in at dinner they ate for breakfast. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 144)

Greed abounds in rhymes such as the "greedy man" who ate all the dates from the almanac (Smith, 45) and the delightful French rhyme that begins:

> There was once a dame called Taitine
> Had a butter palace tis said
> Oh, its walls were all of white flour
> And its floors were crisp gingerbread. (Miller, 22-25)

Cows

"The cow is mother in fairy tale metaphor"(Bettelheim, 188) and it seems to follow quite so in Mother Goose. (Bettelheim tells us that their is much animal symbolism in the children's literature because children often identify more closely with animals than with adults.) (Bettelheim, 293) Cows used as mothers will be seen in examples that follow.

Beyond the Oral Stage and Regression

It appears the rhymes carry the message that one needn't grow up until one is ready. If one views the image of the cow as infant dependence, that message is carried in thefollowing:

> Little maid, pretty maid,
> Whither goest thou?
> Down in the forest to milk my cow.
> Shall I go with you?
> No, not now.
> When I send for thee, then come thou.(Wright, 108)

Even when one has gone beyond the oral stage there is a tendency to want to regress to safety. (Bettelheim tells us that Jack and the Beanstalk does this when he hides in such oral symbols as the oven and the cooking pot)(Bettelheim, 190). Such regression to orality in Mother Goose may be seen in "Baby and I were baked in a pie"(pg. 2), or when the situation really gets scary as in marriage "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater" hides his problem away in his food. There is a female version of this same phenomenon where one hides her husband away in a pint-pot. (Smith, 118)

Although one wants to go back to orality, such regression would be disastrous. (Bettelheim,) English nursery rhymes that show one attempting such regression in symbolism of the cow abound. There begins a rhyme of one who wanted to save his cow

I had a little cow
to save her
I turned her into the meadow
to graze her

and ended with

The sexton came to toll the bell
And pushed the little cow
Into the well. (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England , 208)

or the rhyme that tells

My father died
I can't tell you how
He left me six horses
To drive in my plough

and goes on to tell how the boy was tempted to trade away those horses for a cow. This brought disaster in that the cow was eventually traded down to a mouse who burned down the house.( )

Before I leave the discussion of the cow, I would like to note that the Oxford English Dictionary gives as a definition for "cow," "A timid, faint-hearted person." This meaning for cow was used by 1588 while the word "cow" that stood for female of the bovine family was not used until the 17th c. (OED, 588) This probably has nothing to do with the fact that the cow in nursery rhymes symbolizes a cowardly regression but it is worth noting.

Early Stages of Childhood

Hurlock explains that in early childhood when the child discovers that his mother will not always be around to fulfill his every need, he attempts to gain control over his environment. (Hurlock, 28) Bettelheim explains that a child's need for control is manifested by an irrealistic belief, on the part of the child, that his "own body in general, and specifically his newly discovered sexual equippment, can do everything for him."(Bettelheim, 187)

How does Mother Goose deal with the Irrealistic Belief in One's Body?

Dr. Bettelheim explains that "Rapunzel" is a perfect example of how one's body can be one's salvation. To me, this relates to Mother Goose's "Bah, Bah, Black Sheep." Bettelheim points out that the number "3" stands for totality or the whole person (encompassing the ego, id, superego). (Bettelheim, 10 Since the black sheep(as child often sees himself) has "3" full bags for the "3" who make up the child's immediate world, this rhyme supports the powerful belief in one's body.

The strongest manifestation of the belief that one's body, and one's sexual equippment can do all for one are the rhymes about the hens and the eggs. Hen and egg rhymes abound in Mother Goose anthologies. (Of 411 rhymes in The Mother Goose Treasury, 11 are of hens and of 295 rhymes in The Real Mother Goose , 7 are of hens). And all these hens and eggs run through pages of rhymes and not a one ever gets eaten. Ducks and geese get eaten. (Wm. Baring-Gould, Songs, 11 and Wright, 36 will point out rhymes where other fowl is dined upon, but no one ever ate a chicken dinner).

I feel that the hens symbolize a constant producer of life nutriment, i.e. the egg. (This is a step beyond the life sustainer that the cow produces). Bettelheim tells us that in the fairy tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk," Jack realizes that he has to steal the goose instead of its eggs because "one runs out of things if one cannot produce them or have produced". (Bettelheim, 191)

When we consider in addition that eggs symbolize female sexuality, (Bettelheim, 300) and that hens were synonomous with women in 17th and 18th c England(Wm. Baring-Gould,117), we tend to feel that hen and egg rhymes might deal with "one's body providing one's total support".

An example of how a hen was the animal counterpart of a woman is as follows:

> I had a little hen, the prettiest ever seen
> She washed me the dishes and kept the house clean
> She went to the mill to fetch me some flour
> She brought it home in less than an hour.
> She baked me my bread, she brewed me my ale,
> She sat by the fire and told many a fine tale. (Wm. Baring-Gould,117)

Examples of the importance of egg-laying can be seen in the hen that squakked to her cock that after she did such a wonderful thing as to lay an egg, he doesn't find her some shoes(Wm. Baring-Gould, 303);

> Then all for his kindness
> And all for his care
> She gave him a new-laid egg
> In the garden there. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 135-6);

the Chinese nursery rhyme

> Come and see!
> Come and see!
> Come and see!
> A black hen has laid
> A white egg for me! (Wyndam, unpaged);

and our own favorite

> Hickety, pickety, my black hen
> She lays eggs for gentlemen
> Gentlemen come every day
> To see what my black hen doth lay.

Other rhymes that tell us how precious the eggs are "As I was going to sell my eggs" (Wm. Baring-Gould, 114) and "There was an old woman, I've heard tell"(Wm. Baring-Gould, 159) where people are accosted to get at their eggs.

That eggs most significantly produce new life is seen in

> I bought a dozen new-laid eggs
> of good old farmer Dickens
> I hobbled home upon two legs
> And found them full of chickens. (Smith, 107)

That identification with the chicken and her eggs may be a sign of immaturity almost as much as dependence on the cow and its milk, may be seen in "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son" who, upon reaching maturity with a woman (I will explain how music indicates maturity later), knocked over the pail of milk and broke the eggs.(Rhyme from

Of course eggs are very delicate items and it is most natural to worry that they will break. One of the most popular Mother Goose rhyme is about that very broken egg, "Humpty -Dumpty." I'm not at all sure I understand all that this rhyme says but I know that it is beloved by all. There is also a sense that "Humpty-Dumpty" brings his tragedy upon himself. The Danish version of"Humpty-Dumpty" is

Little Trille
Lay on a shelf
Little Trille
Thence pitched himself.
Not all the men
In our land I ken,
Can put Little Trille right again.(Halliwell, Popular Rhymes of England, 7)

While this Danish version was floating about in my mind, I was doing a pre-school story hour and a very assertive little boy suggested we do some some dramatization of "Humpty-Dumpty." "And what happened to Humpty-Dumpty?" I questioned him. The child replied, "he threw himself off the wall." There is no need to decide on the true meaning of this rhyme. After all, it is a riddle and Dr. Bettelheim tells us that riddles are for mature minds to understand. (Bettelheim, 128) But soon I will discuss my interpretation of all the falling down and climbing up that we see in Mother Goose.

Children Learn to Make Social Adjustments - Debilitated Ego

Hurlock explains that from two to fourteen years and most emphatically from six to fourteen years the child learns to make social adjustments to his outside environment. (Hurlock, 28) He realizes that he must reach out into the

world. As the child "begins its struggle to cope with the inner world of drives and the outer world's problems,"(Bettelheim, 75) he cannot help but have an extremely debilitated ego. This debilitated ego is personified, Bettelheim tells us, in the fairy tale by the fool or simpleton. (Bettelheim, 75)

Mother Goose handles the Debilitated Ego

Neuberg states that in 18th and 19th c. chapbooks there were two types of heroes: one the serious type as was Robin Hood and the other the comic type of Simple Simon. (Neuberg, 17-8) The Enlgish nursery verses of Simple Simon are long and varied and are among the most popular rhymes. Poor Simon couldn't get food from the pieman, he went fishing from his mother's pail, he hunted hares in the street, he tried to roast a snowball, and carry water in a sieve. (Briggs, 34-5) The simpleton is not alone in English rhymes. The French tell of

A bold brave boy I passed by a wood one day
Twas where the cuckoos stay
Twas where the cuckoos stay
And in their pretty song they sang
cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo.
But I thought those cuckoos said,
Cook you, cook you, cook you. (Miller, 26)

The Animal Versus the Human Nature

It is most difficult for the child to deal with his selfish inner drives and his need to be generous in his reach out for social acceptance. As Bettelheim espouses about fairy tales and what I can see in Mother Goose, the literature accepts both parts of the child's nature and translates them into concrete entities that the child can better see and learn to integrate. Two sides of child's nature are shown in fairy tales by animals and people, brother and brother, brother and sister, day and night(night being the time for our darker side), id animals and ego animals. (Bettelheim, 78, 293-4)

Animal Versus Human Nature in Mother Goose

Siblings, says Bettelheim personify the "child's awareness of a dual existance on an animal and a human level."(Bettelheim, 78) He goes on to explain

that a brother will take a sister out into the wide world frought with psychological dangers. The sister, symbol of the mother once boy has left home, will rescue him. (Bettelheim, 79) "Jack and Jill" is a perfect example of this personification. Jack takes his sister up the hill and after he breaks his crown, she tumbles after to seem him mended with vinegar and brown paper.

Perhaps because children know that their animal nature comes to the fore at night when they are in bed, they can so merrily accept babies falling out of their beds as in "Hush-a-bye baby on the treetop," and the less familiar

> Catch him crow! carry him kite
> Take him away till the apples are ripe
> When they are ripe and ready to fall
> Here comes baby, apples and all. (Briggs. 185)

Animals are used, as mentioned earlier, with overabundance in Mother Goose. Those used to show the coarser side of one's nature appear to snails, frogs, pigs, and birds of prey. Those animals used to show the superego and adult sides of one's nature seem to be most birds(most particularly robins and sparrows), cats and hens(which also appear female) & bees. Animals that appear to relate to little boys may be pigs, frogs and snails, dogs, and blackbirds. An entire section will soon be devoted to each type of animal that appears with regularity in Mother Goose.

Venturing Out

Dr. Bettelheim explains that children are pulled by a wish to venture out and a wish to stay at home where they are secure. One way in which this pull is made concrete is by the use of two brothers where one brother wishes to be tied to the past and the other wishes to reach out to the future. (Bettelheim, 91)

Mother Goose deals with Venturing Out

The two brother pattern that Bettelheim explains about in fairy tales is present in Mother Goose. The following is a good example of such:

> Robin and Richard were two pretty men
> They lay in bed till the clock struck 10(an unconscionably late time by their standards)
>
> Then up starts Robin and looks at the sky
> Oh! Brother Richard, the sun's very high
> You go before with the bottle and bag
> And I will come after on little Jack Nag.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 64)

The need to venture out into the psychological dangers of the world is a strong need and at the same time must be very frightening to one so one would imagine that a lot of nursery rhymes should deal with this conflict. It is my feeling that the up/down theme that is used so often in Mother Goose exemplifies the venturing out conflict. In The Annotated Mother Goose there were at least 13 rhymes that dealt with going up and down. One of the most familiar is "Jack and Jill."* Even the Baring-Goulds ask, who would ever go up a hill for water? (Wm. Baring-Gould, 58) To me, the overall message in this and the other rhymes is that one must venture "up" and it doesn't really hurt you to get knocked"down." Everyone gets knocked down for

> Wear you a hat or wear you a crown
> All that goes up must surely come down. (Smith, 52)

Indeed there are quite a few varieties of royalty going up and down. The King of France went up the hill in various versions with 4,000 men, 20,000 men, and 40,000 men(Halliwell, Popular Rhymes of England, 9) and the Duke of York went with his men(Wm. Baring-Gould, 201) but it made no difference for they all came down again. Less prestigous members of society who have ventured up the hill only to return to the bottom are"Eency Weency Spider," "The mouse that ran up the clock," and the Chinese mouse whose adventure follows:

> He climbed up the candlestick
> The little mousie brown
> And he climbed up the candle
> But he couldn't get down
> He called for his grandma
> But his grandma was downtown

*see IIa brother/sister theme.

Bettelheim explains that like the brother/brother theme, the brother/sister theme deals with the child's fear in venturing out. In this motif the brother takes the sister out into the wide world. They go to learn about the world but there are great psychological dangers. The sister, symbol of motherly care once one has left home, is the rescuer. (Bettelheim, 78-9) "Jack and Jill" illustrates this theme.

So he curled himself into a ball
And rolled himself down. (Wyndam, unpaged)

There is also much to indicate that falling down is a learning or growing experience. Bettelheim indicates that falling, especially in a well, shows a loss of naivite and innocence. "Feeling anything, even pain, is a forerunner to love,"(Bettelheim, 288) so perhaps falling even when we do get hurt is a positive experience. Maybe this accounts for the lullabyes that drop the babies and the Humpty Dumpty egg who breaks apart. And all the nursery characters who go up hills aren't terribly mature. There is the one who tells

When I went up sandy hill
I met a sandy boy
I cut his throat
I sucked his blood
And left his skin a hanging-o. (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 100)

It may be that one must really be mature to deal with staying"up." After all London Bridge itself couldn't be kept up by anything less than a responsible man with his lady.

Other nursery characters who go up and down are "Wee Willie Winkie," "Goose-a-goose-a-gander," "Old Father Long Legs" who is tossed up and down stairs, (Wm. Baring-Gould, 62) and Gay in "Gay go up and Gay go down,(Wm. Baring-Gould, 640)

Parental Retaliation

Bettelheim says when young children venture out and assert themselves, they challenge their parents dominance and respect. Since the child wants to remove parental powers, it is natural that the child thinks that his parents will want to retaliate. (Bettelheim, 98-9)

Mother Goose deals with Parental Reataliation Fears

It seems clear that children really feel that they are threats to parents. This is evidenced by the long list of rhymes and superstitions that begin Rhyme 503 in The Annotated Mother Goose with "Step on a crack, break your mother's back." As far as the parental retaliation goes, Bettelheim feels that children worry about desertion because they are unable to care for themselves and that is why many fairy tales deal with desertion. Mother Goose has such stories to o,

This is seen in The Babes in the Wood where two children

> Were stolen away on a fine summer's day
> And left in a wood, as I've heard people say.
>
> They sobbed and they sighed and they bitterly cried,
> And the poor little things, they lay down and died.

Adolescence

Hurlock defines adolescence as the period between 14 and 21 years old where the "major developmental task is preparation for adulthood." (Hurlock, 28) Bettelheim says that childhood is over when one realizes that he must give up fantasy and reliance upon one's body for everything, and strive for higher things. (Bettelheim, 188)

Mother Goose deals with Struggle to reach Adulthood

Dr. Bettelheim explains that one shows that one has reached maturity in the fairy tales by moving toward a home of their own with a marriage partner and by solving a riddle which symbolizes finding the answer to life or sex.(Bettelheim, 128)

Nursery rhymes tell one quite clearly that maturity is not something that can be given one but must be earned. If you recall from page 5, the boy whose father died and left him fine horses to pull his plough soon lost everything. Another rhyme that tells how negligible such unearned treasure is follows:

> My father died a month ago
> and left me all his riches
> A feather bed, a wooden leg,
> And a pair of leather breeches.
>
> He left me a teapot without a spout
> A cup without a handle,
> A tobacco pipe without a lid,
> And half a farthing candle.(Opie.Oxford Book of Verse, 162)

On the contrary, one must work for maturity. "Whistle, daughter, whistle" is a good example of how hard a girl will try. In this rhyme the mother asks that her daughter whistle but the daughter cries that she cannot. The mother offers her a sheep if she can whistle and then a cow(temptation to oral regression) but the daughter still cries that she cannot. At last the mother offers her a man

She replies

Mother, I cannot whistle
But I'll do the best I can.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 158-9)

More often than having to try hard, a Mother Goose character must really fight a parent for the privilege of growing up. In the "Golden Ball" (Bettelheim explains that a golden ball stands for perfection, 287) awaits the golden ball to be brought to set her free. First her mother appears but has "neither brought the golden ball nor come to set ..(her) free." Then appear in successive verses her father, brother, sister, uncle, and cousin but none have brought the golden ball but have come to see her hanged. Finally her sweetheart arrives and he carries the golden ball to set her free. (S. Baring-Gould, 85) Then there is "My boy Billy" who goes courting against his mother's wishes and is poisoned for it. (S. Baring-Gould, 36-9) In a lighter vain we see these two:

Mother,may I go to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb
But don't go near the water.

and

Father, may I go to war?
Yes, you may my son.
Wear your woolen comforter
But don't fire off your gun.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 326)

There is an abundance of riddles in Mother Goose. Many appear to have nothing directly to do with understanding the meaning of responsibility or sex but some like the following have everything to do with such:

How can there be a cherry without a stone?
How cna there be a chicken without a bone?
How can there be a ring without an end?
How can there be a baby without cryin? (Wm. Baring-Gould, 162)

Keys appear to be used symbolically to open doors to adulthood. Such rhymes as "This is the key of the kingdom" (Wm. Baring-Gould, 264) and "Oh, madam, I will give you the keys of Canterbury (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 182)

Music and the Fiddle

I cannot leave discussion of maturity without noting the immense symbolic importance of music in general, and the fiddle in particular. Bruno Bettelheim says that "the fiddle symbolizes artistic achievement and with it the highest human accomplishment." (Bettelheim, 185) While the fiddle is used occasionally in the fairy tales, it appears to be the overriding motif in nursery rhymes which concern themselves with reaching adulthood.

Once one has a fiddle, it is never to be parted with.

> Jacky, come give me thy fiddle
> If ever thou mean to thrive.
> Nay, I'll not give my fiddle
> To any man alive.
>
> If I should give my fiddle,
> They'll think that I've gone mad.
> For many a joyful day
> My fiddle and I have had. (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 76)

and

> John, come sell thy fiddle
> And buy thy wife a gown!
> Nay, I'll not sell my fiddle
> For ne'er a wife in town. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 65)

One works to attain the fiddle or musical ability. The following rhymes illustrate.

> I won't be my father's Jack
> I won't be my mother's Gill,
> I will be the fiddler's wife
> And have music when I will. (Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 40)

and the young girl on page 14 who tries the musical accomplishment of whistling.

On the theme that one's father cannot hand one maturity or "riches," neither can he had one a fiddle. The rhyme "My father was a Frenchman," (the French are pictured as dopes), the father buys a fiddle for his son and then father proceeds to cut it to pieces. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 234)

And learning to play a musical instrument is not an overnight accomplishment. "Tom, Tom, the Piper's son" could only play "Over the hills and far away" and "Jack the Piper" could only play "Tie up your petticoats tighter." (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 79) Both these tunes are indicative of not full maturity.

A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go who was eaten by the duck may well have been punished for being a non-responsible person because he cowardly ran out on his lady. The symbol that the frog was not yet mature may have been the fact that frog was unable to sing or make music when his lady requested him to do so.

SYMBOLS AND STEREOTYPES

Animals in General

We find such heavy use of animals in Mother Goose perhaps because "children often feel closer to animals than to adults." (Bettelheim, 293) To a child, "whatever has life, has life very much like his own. The child expects answers from things that arouse his curiosity; and because he is self-centered, he expects the animals to talk about things that are important to him."(Bettelheim, 46) That children imagine conversing freely with animals is seen in "Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?"(Briggs, 163) "Bow wow wow, whose dog art thou?(Briggs, 16) and"Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?" (Briggs, 11)

"Dangerous and destructive animals symbolize the id (not yet subjected to ego and superego control). Helpful animals represent ones natural energy(again the id but now made to serve interests of total personality). Some animals, such as the white dove, symbolize the superego." (Bettelheim, 75-6)

An analysis of the use of animals frequently found in Mother Goose rhymes and the part of one's personality that each may represent now follows.

Birds

It appears that no other animal appears in Mother Goose with the frequency that birds do. A random sampling shows that of the 295 rhymes in The Real Mother Goose, 20 are about birds not including rhymes about fowl. Of the 411 rhymes to be found in Mother Goose Treasury, 36 are about flying birds. Many of the bird rhymes are spiritual such as "When I was a little girl about seven years old"(Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 45-6) where all the birds help the young girl to build a church or when the birds bury "the babes in the woods." Bettelheimian interpretation of this would be "that birds fly high and can symbolize the superego."(Bettelheim, 101) Not all but most of the nursery rhyme birds appear to symbolize the superego. One reason may be that they make music. Such birds are the white dove, (as seen in Wm. Baring-Gould, 155), the canary(as seen in Wright, 93), the martin and lark (as seen in Wm. Baring-Gould, 211), the cuckoo (as seen in Halliwell. Nursery Rhymes of England, 195), any bird referred to as little(as seen in Halliwell's Nursery Rhymes of England, 204), but most particularly the robin and the sparrow.

The innocence of the robin is expressed in such rhymes as

Little robin redbreast
Sitting on a pole
Niddle noddle
Went his head
And poop went in his hole. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 25)

and

Cock Robin got up early
At the break of day
And went to Jenny's window
To sing a roundelay
He sang Cock Robin's love (use of music shows love)
To the pretty Jenny Wren
And when he got to the end
Then he began again. (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of Eng., 206)

The robin must never be harmed. Many rhymes teach us to protect him.

Come hither sweet robin and be not afraid
I would not hurt even a feather
Come hither sweet robin and pick up some bread
To feed you this very cold weather (Smith, 13)

and the popular

The north wind doth blow
And we shall have snow
And what will poor robin do then
He'll hide in a barn to keep himself warm
And tuck his head under his wing. (Briggs, 20)

We all remember the outragous cry as to "Who killed cock robin?" and

All the birds of the air
Fell a sighin and sobbin'
When they heard the bell toll for poor cock robin.(Smith,172)

and the warning

The robin and the redbreast
The robin and the wren
If you . take out of their nest
You'll never thrive again.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 211)

The pussy cat, who is always loved, valued, and respected in Mother Goose, looks somewhat foolish when chasing a robin:

Little robin redbreast sat upon a tree
Up jumped pussy cat, down jumped he (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 211)

I can't begin to guess why the robin symbolizes "the spiritual" but it does. Wm. and Ceil Baring-Gould point out that superstition has it that the robin's red breast was produced by the blood of Jesus for this little bird is said to have come to help Jesus at the Cross. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 25)

The second most spiritual bird in Mother Goose appears to be the sparrow. Examples of how they must not be harmed may be seen in

A little cock sparrow sat on a tree
And he chirruped, and he chirruped, so merry was he.
A naughty boy came with his wee bow and arrow(Wm. Baring-Gould, 130)

and

Little Tom Twigh bought a fine bow and arrow
And what did he shoot? Why a poor little sparrow.(Smith,132)

Japanese nursery rhymes express the same feeling for sparrows in

Wake up little sparrows
And open your eyes
Come sit on a twig
And see the sun rise. (De Forest, 16)

On the other hand, crows and such carrion birds are not to be sympathized with. The Opies relate 8 crow rhymes which chastize crow's carrion activities or warn them to beware of eating the farmer's crops. (Opie. Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book , 31, 67, 99, 138-9, 160, 161, 180) One does not hesitate to shoot a crow as is seen in the Mother Goose rhyme that begins

A carrion crow sat on an oak
Fol de riddle, lol de riddle
Wife, bring me my old bent bow (Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England, 211)

The Japanese again have the same feeling as the English as seen in

O crows take care! beware!
Do keep a sharp lookout
A hunter with a gun
Is looking about. (De Forest, 36)

That crows are considered somewhat frightening is seen in

Tweedldum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
had spoiled his nice new rattle
Just then flew by a monstrous crow
As black as a tar barrel
Which frightened both the heroes so
They quite forgot their quarrel. (Briggs, 66)

and

A raven cried croak! and they all tumbled down
The mare broke her knees and the farmer his crown
The mischievous raven flew laughing away
And vowed he would serve them the same the next day.(Briggs,1

The literature has long had crows (and ravens, a type of crow) cast in a bad light. The Oxford English Dictionary quotes an early use of the word "crow" in the sentence "Rooks are sociable birds but crows fly mainly in pairs."(OED, 612) Bettelheim points out in the fairy tale "The Raven" the mother's curse upon her child is that he be changed into a raven.(Bettelheim, 284)

Blackbirds seem to fall somewhere between the crows and the spiritual robin. They strike one as somewhat human and do things a boy might do.

The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that, while in the U.S. blackbirds are somewhat synonomous with crows, in England they are not. The blackbird is defined as "a well-known European songbird." (OED, 223) In 1616 this sentence appeared: "The strongest and stoutest bird that can be is the blackbird." (OED, 223)

Blackbirds appear human to me in such rhymes as

> Two little blackbirds
> Sitting on a hill
> One named Jack
> And one named Jill (Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 59)

where they not only do ordinary things but bear the names synonomous with "boy" and "girl." Unlike robins and sparrows the blackbird is able to take care of himself but he is not a ravager of prey and crops. The blackbird appears to take only what he needs as when

> The snail crawls out with his slimy house on his back
> But a blackbird is watching him on his track
> Tack! Tack! on the roof of his house
> He gobbles him up as a cat does a mouse.(S. Baring-Gould, 71)

While the blackbird is not totally innocent, he is not worthy of being shot as is seen in

> As I went over the water
> The water went over me
> I saw two little blackbirds
> Sitting on a tree.
> One called me a rascal
> And one called me a thief.
> I took up my little black stick
> And knocked out all their teeth. (Briggs, 145)

Further evidence that blackbirds may be like boys might be seen in the fact that "Sing a song of Sixpence" was originally four and twenty naughty boys baked into the pie and it was later changed to blackbirds. (Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 296)

Frogs and Snails

We all know what little boys are made of: frogs and snails and puppy dog tails. But why are they?

Bettelheim tells us that frogs are symbolic of sexual relations because: (1) the frog is a lowly animal form like the child (2) "moves from a lower to a higher stage of living"(Bettelheim, 101) (3) doesn't arouse fear but is repugnant indicating that while one is afraid of sex, there is no need to be (4) is associated with tacky, clammy sensations that are associated with the sexual.(Bettelheim, 289-90)

Bettelheim further explains, that in the fairy tale of the "Frog King," the fact that the frog comes out of a well indicates a certain ugliness, complication, and dark side to life. (Bettelheim, 287-8) Frogs in wells are to be found in Mother Goose in the forerunner to "A frog he would a-wooing go" entitled "A most strange wedding of the frog and the mouse" which began "It was a frog in the well"(Sackville-West, 58) and the related rhyme "There was a frog lived in a well"(Wm. Baring-Gould, 77).

The repugnant aspect of the frog is to be seen in the English nursery rhyme entitled "A gaping wide-mouthed waddling frog." (Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 663) The Japanese also see the frog as repugnant as can be seen in the lullaby which promises the baby a flower if it will sleep but threatens that if it continues to cry "a big ugly frog will croak by ...(his) side."(DeForest, 48) The Chinese may see the frog as undisciplined and impulsive as they have a nursery rhyme that tells the frog he just keeps hopping and doesn't even stop when he reaches the sea but plunges right in.(Wyndam, unpaged)

But of course the most famous English rhyme about a frog is "A frog he would a-wooing go." (It appears in almost every large anthology and has of late as well as earlier times been published separately.) It has great length for a popular nursery rhyme and it is worth examining what it has to say. A frog goes out courting, exploring his sexuality, and is frightened away by danger that comes to his lady. He is not a truly mature, responsible man but

one who is driven by his id. Punishment for such behavior is death to the frog. "A lilywhite duck came and gobbled him up."(Smith, 151) The mere fact that the duck is lily white indicates that it did the "right thing" when it ate frog. As mentioned earlier, we see that the frog has not reached the "highest form of life" as he is not able to make music when the mouse requested him to. The Stephens' version of the rhyme adds an additional anxiety for the child as we are told that frog goes courting against his mother's will.

The fact that this rhyme has deep psychological meaning to the child might be seen in Sackville-West's recounting how " a grown man of ...(his) acquaintance was dismayed as a little boy and haunted for the rest of his life by the seemingly inocuous rhyme 'A frog he would a-wooing go." (Sackville-West, 19)

Snails appear to be treated very much like frogs. And well they should be as both live on land and water, both change their form, both have tacky, clammy sensations, and the Baring-Goulds tell us that both were thought to remove warts.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 210) Snails were "regarded as vermin injurious to fruit." (Wm. Baring-Gould, 210) Many rhymes were used to conjure out snails so they could be killed. Examples of such are

> Snail, snail, come out of your hole
> Or else I will beat you black as coal.
> Snail, snail, put out your horns
> I'll give you bread and barley corns.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 209-1

and

> Snail, snail, put out your tail
> Robbers are coming to pull down your wall.(Halliwell. Nursery Rhymes of Eng., 197)

The Chinese also entice snails out of shells as is seen in

> Little snail, little snail with your hard stony bed
> First stick out your horns and then stick out your head
> Your father and mother have brought some roast meat
> So come little snail, please hurry and eat.
> But where has that little snail gone, please tell?
> He's turned right around and gone back in his shell.
> (Wyndam, unpaged)

That snails are thought to be repugnant and clammy can be seen in

> The snail crawls out with his house on his back
> You must know whence he comes by his slimy track(S. Baring-Gould, 71)

And the fact that, in actuality, the snail is really a harmless creature is seen in the very popular

> Four and twenty tailors went to kill a snail
> The best one among them dar'st not touch his tail
> (Wm. Baring-Gould, 199)

Greater amusement is to be gleaned from this ditty when one realizes that tailors were always the personification of cowardice.

As a final note on frogs and snails, they are always spoken of as male.

And Puppy Dog Tails

To begin, there is a somewhat phallic association to be made with the "tails" of the puppy dogs. Psychologists agree that a general fear among little boys is the losing of their sexual equipment. A rhyme attesting to that anxiety is

> O where, o where has my little dog gone
> O where, o where has he gone
> With his ears cut short and his tail cut long
> O where, o where has he gone. (Briggs, 29)

But even without any thought of tails, dogs are to be associated with little boys. Bettelheim explains that dogs are associated with mankind in general because they are land animals, live in closest proximity to mankind, and are helpful to man. Children associate dogs with themselves because they represent instinctual nature in that they can bite and excrete as they please; and they represent the ego in that they are able to learn to control their instincts. (Bettelheim, 100)

A boyish trait is seen in how "the little dog laughed" when the cow jumped ove
That the dog acts on instinct is seen in

> The dog will bark
> I dare not stir
> Take a halter
> And hang up the cur.
> No! no! Why? Why?
> I would not for a guinea
> My dog should die.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 38)

It is also clear that the dog must not be killed (or punished) for his action, because like the child, he may not be able to contol it. In keeping with the anxiety of extreme punishment for an uncontrolled act is the rhyme that tells that the dog will have to be hanged because the "little dog" burnt the tail of the ethereal sparrow. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 80) (One should note that in past England animals were tried and hanged for doing offenses to humans). Little dogs, like little children, may indeed act on instinct and cause grave consequences as in the rhyme that follows:

The little black dog ran round the house
And set the bull a-roaring
And drove the monkey in the boat
Who set the oars-a-rowing
And scared the crow upon the rock
Who cracked his throat by crowing (Briggs, 82)

Dogs are simpletons as children see themselves in "state of their debilitated ego." This is illustrated by the following:

I had a little dog and his name was Blue Bell
I gave him some work and he did it very well.
I sent him upstairs to pick up a pin,
He stepped in the coal-scuttle up to the chin.
I sent him to the garden to pick some sage,
He tumbled down and fell in a rage.(Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of Eng., 196)

and

I had a little dog and they called him Buff
I sent him to the shop for a hap'orth of snuff
But he lost the bag, and spilled the snuff
So take that cuff, and that's enough.(Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of Eng., 200)

In the eight above rhymes I have used to associate dogs with little boys, none refer to the dog as being anything but male and only one rhyme does not refer to dog as "little" or "puppy."

Further evidence that the dog is not associated with the superego like birds is that the dog is unable to sing. In "A frog he would a-wooing go," we see the frog cannot produce music (i.e. sing) because he is as "hoarse as a dog."

That dogs do mature to be useful is seen in

Hark! hark! the dogs do bark
The beggars are coming to town (Wm. Baring-Gould, 84)

for they warn us. The Chinese have a nursery rhyme that goes "We keep a dog to guard the house ... but what's the use of a girl like you." (Wyndam, unpaged)

Pigs

One could not find any animal who would more represent the "instinctual" part of one's personality than does the pig. Indeed the Oxford English Dictionary tells us that the term "pig" has been applied contempuously to people since 1586. (OED, 2170)

Pigs smell bad and are generally so messy as to be avoided if possible. Attesting to this nursery view of them are

Barber, barber shave a pig,
How many hairs will make a wig?
Four and twenty, that's enough
Give the barber a pinch of snuff. (Briggs, 109)

and

Curly Locks, Curly Locks,
Wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash dishes
Nor yet feed the swine. (Wright, 39)

and

Elsie Marly has grown so fine
She won't get up to serve the swine(Smith, 18)

In addition to this they can be very stubborn as can be seen when the old woman purchased the pig and then couldn't get him to go over the style to get him home. (Sackville-West, 27)

In addition pigs are terrible gluttons. A rather obscure rhyme (perhaps because of its heavy didactic quality) tells

Do look at those pigs as they lay in the straw
Said Dick to his father one day
They keep eating longer than I ever saw
Oh what greedy gluttons are they.

to what his father tells him it is their nature and adds

But when a great boy such as you are, my dear,
Does nothing but eat all day

And he keeps taking nice things till he makes himself sick
What a glutton indeed! we may say.(S. Baring-Gould, 74-5)

And piggies are always going to market.

Since pigs are sloppy and gluttons and children believe one should be treated in the same way that one behaves, it seems most natural that we should ridicule and stuff ourselves on the pig. That the pig's main purpose is to be eaten may be seen in the following:

To market, to market, to buy a fat pig
Home again, home again, jiggedy, jig.(Halliwell, Popular Rhymes of Eng., 12)

Tom, Tom, the piper's son
Stole a pig and away he run
The pig was eat
And he was beat(Halliwell, Nursery Rhymes of England,)

The Chinese tell their tots that the purpose of the pig is to "make a feast or two." (Wyndam, unpaged) Rhymes that ridicule misfortunes of pigs are

Little Betty Winckle she had a pig
It was a little pig and not very big
When he was alive he lived in clover
But now he's dead and that's all over (Wm. Baring-Gould, 53)

and

Piggy on the railway
Picking up stones
Along came an engine
And broke piggy's bones (Alderson, 113)

and

Grandpa Grig had a pig
In a field of clover
Piggie died, grandpa cried,
And all the fun was over (Alderson, 73)

And the plain silly rhyme, "There was a lady loved a swine." (Briggs, 141)

Rats and Mice

Rats and mice were always looked upon as bothersome pests as they easily depleted the food supply. It is for this reason that cats were so highly valued (Sackville-West, 47). Cats will be discussed in detail in a later section but it is difficult to discuss "Rats and Mice" in Mother Goose without discussing the cat for so much of the place of the rodents in the rhymes is in being caught by the cat.

That rats and mice are negatively thought of is seen in the taunt

My mill grinds
Pepper and spice
Your mill grinds
Rats and mice.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 33)

That rodents are to be caught by the cat is seen in "Rats in the garden, catch'em Towser,"(Briggs, 127) Dame Wiggins of Lee and he Seven Wonderful Cats that she kept because she hated rats and mice and

My pussy cat has got the gout
And the rats and mice can play about. (Smith, 129)

The use of cats to prey upon rats and mice may be universal in nursery rhymes. A French nursery rhyme tells

Cadet Rouselle has three fine cats
They never go a-catching rats.(Miller, 30)

And the Chinese say "We keep a cat to catch a mouse." (Wyndam, unpaged)

It may also be universally felt that rats are definitely horrible, a little mouse is harmless. In English they chant

Pretty John Watts, we are troubled with rats
Will you drive them out of the house?
We have mice too in plenty
They feast in the pantry.
But let them stay and nibble away
What harm is a little brown mouse?(Wm. Baring-Gould, 117)

And in France they say

We've caught you now at last, you little mousie gray
We've caught you now at last, you shall not get away
Ah but God made me to run
Nay, nay, you came to steal
I will steal your food no more my gentle little girly
If you're sorry, you shall go, you little mousie gray.
(Miller, 87)

It is further expressed how sensitive mice are in the very popular

> Hickory, Dickory, dock,
> The mouse ran up the clock.
> The clock struck one,
> The mouse ran down,
> Hickory, dickory, dock. (Briggs, 77)

which fells a mouse by striking ten o'clock. The other very popular Mother Goose rhyme of mice is

> Three blind mice, see how they run!
> They all ran after the farmer's wife,
> Who cut off their tales with a carving knife,
> Did you ever see such a sight in your life,
> As three blind mice? (Briggs, 95)

I wasn't able to understand this rhyme until I happened to read in Sackville-West that he could not understand this rhyme because he said "that mice are born blind we all know but newborn mice cannot run."(Sackville-West, 16) It struck me then that what the rhyme could mean, by Bettelheimian theory, that the young mouse is so totally dependent that he literally cannot see and if he tries to run or venture some independence the woman of the house may cut off his tail. Hence the young child with the "debilitated ego" and the need to venture out on his own may fear that his mother may "cut off his tail" for doing so.

It is also expressed in Mother Goose that mice are intelligent and able homemakers who make desirable wives. Such is seen in the following:

> Six little mice sat down to spin;
> Pussy passed by and she peeped in.
> What are you doing, my little men?
> Weaving coats for gentlemen.
> Shall I come in and cut off your threads?
> No, no, Mistress Pussy, you'd bite off our heads.
> (Briggs, 90)

And the frog who went a-wooing a mouse and the bumblebee who marries the mouse. (As will be explained later, the bumblebee is symbolic of great industry, sweetness, maturity, and accomplishment).

In one rhyme rats and mice appear to symbolize the dangers of the outside world that a child feels when he first realizes that his mother will not always

be around with "an unending supply of love and nutriment" so the child must make adjustments to the outside world. It follows:

When I was a little boy,
I lived by my self;
And all the bread and cheese I got,
I hid upon my shelf.

Then the rats and the mice,
They made such a strife,
I was forced to go to London
To buy me a wife. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 29)

Horses

There are many horse rhymes to be found in Mother Goose. One reason for popularity of horse rhymes may well be, as both the Opies and Baring-Goulds tell us, most were ditties to be sung while one rocked a child on his knee. The rhymes tell us that horses are valuable because they carry people and do so with speed. Mother Goose also tells us, more importantly perhaps, that a horse is worth more than its price in gold.

That horses carry people is obvious and can be seen in the "Ride a cock horse" rhymes(Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhymes 617-9), "My mother said I should never play with the gypsies in the wood"(Alderson,), "Ride away, ride away, Johnny shall ride"(Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 620).

That horses are valuable can be seen in

If wishes were horses
Beggars would ride(Wm. Baring-Gould, 290)

That horses are speedy is expressed by the rhyme used by children when starting a race

Good horses, bad horses,
What is the time of day?
3 o'clock, 4 o'clock:
Now far away.

That a horse is to be held dear even when it is not materially valuable is seen in

John Cook had a little grey mare
Her back stood up and her bones were bare(Wm. Baring-Gould, 95)

That one would not trade his horse's well-being for any amount of money is seen in

> Will you lend me your mare to ride a mile?
> No! She is lame leaping over a stile.
> Alack and I must go to the fair
> I'll give you good money for lending your mare.
> (Wm. Baring-Gould, 153)

and the ever popular

> I had a little pony,
> His name was Dapple Gray;
> I lent him to a lady
> To ride a mile away.
> She whipped him, she slashed him,
> She rode him through the mire;
> I would not lend my pony now,
> For all the lady's hire. (Briggs, 179)

Insects

There is some mention of spiders in Mother Goose (seepp. 2-3). The other two insects that one meets with any meaning are the ladybug and the bee.

Bruno Bettelheim has a lot to say about the bee. At one point he tells us that she, bees are always she, "is the symbol of hard work and sweetness" (Bettelheim, 185) and is therefore symbolic of maturity. At another point Bettelheim explains that "the bee is an apt image for opposite aspects of our nature since...(it) produces sweet honey and stings painfully. (Bettelheim, 76)

That the bee is a hard worker is attested to in rhyme, but like other didacticisms, is not popular among children. An example follows:

> Little Bird of Paradise (i.e. bee)
> She works her work both neat and nice.
> She pleases God, she pleases man,
> She does the work that no man can. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 688)

Unlike the horse and the dog, there is no real affection for the bee and she only has value in what she is able to produce. An example follows:

> A swarm of bees in May
> Is worth a load of hay.
> A swarm of bees in June
> Is worth a silver spoon.
> A swarm of bees in July
> Is not worth a fly. (Wright, 17)

The only thing though that anyone remembers about the bee is her strange marriage to the mouse or fly.

Sackville-West tells us that the popular ladybug rhyme that tells

Ladybug, ladybug fly away home.
Your house is on fire,
Your children will burn.

is a universal rhyme. He feels that this rhyme has meaning in that the ladybug keeps her eggs in a ball and this ball represents the sun. (Sackville-West, 56) This would explain why her house is on fire. Bettelheim tells us that the sun is an important symbol as it is a golden sphere and therefore symbolizes perfection. (Bettelheim, 287) Manhardt feels that the ladybug is sent home in an effort to protect us from the dangers of sunset as the sky appears to be burning at sunset. (Sackville-West, 57)

The ladybug rhyme does appear to be universal. In English there are versions calling her ladybird, burnie bee, and even lady-cow. (Wm. Baring Gould (p. 208) says she is called lady-cow in Yorkshire). Sackville-West cannot imagine why she should be called a cow by by Bettelheimian interpretation nothing could be more natural than to have the symbol of motherhood be a cow. A ladybird variation of the rhyme in English is

Ladybird, ladybird,
Fly away home.
Your house is on fire
And your children all gone;
All except one
And that's little Ann
And she has crept under
The warming pan. (Briggs, 115)

Another English rhyme that attests to the ladybug's mother image is

Burnie bee, burnie bee,
Tell me when your wedding be?
If it be tomorrow day,
Take your wings and fly away. (Wright, 25)

The common ladybug rhyme appears in Japanese and Chinese. The Chinese version follows:

Ladybug, ladybug, fly away do.
Fly to the mountain to feed upon dew.
Feed upon dew and when you are through,
Ladybug, ladybug, fly home again do. (Wyndam, unpaged)

Cats

We have noted the industrious bee, the ladybug, the cow, and the hen are animal symbols for the female. So also is the cat. The pussy cat is valuable, lovable, clean, hard-working, a good mother, and quite mature.

The main value of the cat is, of course, its rodent-catching abilities. This is explained sufficently in the section entitled "Rats and Mice." (pp. 27-9) That puss was so valuable was explained by Sackville-West who explains that "a cat was worth a calf or a filly and the cat who guarded the king's barn was worth a lot more." (Sackville-West, 47) Sackville-West feels that

A cat came fiddling out of the barn
With a pair of bag-pipes under her arm.
She could sing nothing but fiddle cum fee,
The mouse has married the bumble bee.(Opie. Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, 112)

and other rhymes that put the cat by the barn refer to the king's barn cat. That the cat is worthy to be in the company of kings and queens is shown in

Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to visit the queen. (Briggs, 163)

and

A cat may look at a king,
And sure I may look at an ugly thing. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 759)

That the cat is the object of great love is seen in

I love pussy,
Her coat is so warm;
And if I don't hurt her,
She'll do me no harm. (Briggs, 176)

and

Hey, my kitten, my kitten,
And hey, my kitten, my deary!
Such a sweet pet as this
Was neither far nor neary. (Wright, 53)

We can recall the sympathy that is aroused by "Ding, dong bell" that there could be

Such a naughty boy as that
Who tried to drown poor pussy cat
Who never did him any harm
But killed the mice in father's barn.(Wm. Baring-Gould, 55-6)

The only negative aspects to cats a strong tongue or temper as is seen in the rhyme resonse to one who has called you a name:

Spit, cat, spit!
Your tongue shall be slit.
And all the dogs in our town
Shall have a bit of it. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 36)

and that she may be lazy by lying or sleeping by the fire. Sackville-West points out that a cat was worth much less if she had marks of fire on her. This was probably because it showed she was lazy. (Sackville-West, 47) This seems to be born out in the rhyme that goes

Pussy sits by the fire.
How can she be so fair? (Wm. Baring-Gould, 116)

(Incidentally, the Baring-Goulds tell us that this rhyme was later changed to "Pussy sits by the fire, so pretty and so fair" because the meaning of the original rhyme is unclear). The laziness and unworthiness of a cat by the fire is seen by what this allows others to get away with in

The cat asleep by the side of the fire
The mistress snored loud as a pig.
John took up his fiddle by Jenny's desire,
And struck up a bit of a jig. (Wm. Baring-Gould, 90)

The reason that I feel that the cat is symbolic of maturity in women is its close association with the fiddle. That mastery of the fiddle is the sign of maturity, is duscussed fully on page 15. A cat is directly associated with playing the fiddle in "A cat came fiddling out of the barn"(p. 32) and "Hey, diddle, diddle"(p. 1). It may also be possible that when a cat is associated with her kit, a fiddle may be referred to because as early as 1542 a "kit" was defined as "a small fiddle." (Oxford English Dictionary) So when I went to St. Ives, every cat might have had seven fiddles.

Boy and Girl Animals

Those animals definitely associated with boys are the horse (often called cock horse); the dog, frog, and snail indicating one's coarser nature; and the robin and sparrow who symbolize one's spiritual nature.

There appear to be no animals to indicate little girls but animals that represent women. These mature, clean-living female animals are the cow, hen, bumblebee, ladybug, and cat. Even when these animals are termed little or referred to with nursery nicknames, they are thought to be women as in

Pussy cat, pussy cat, with a white foot,
When is your wedding, I'll come to it?

Boy and Girl People

The anthropomorhisms mentioned in the preceding section reflect the picture given of boy and girl people in the nursery rhymes. We are quite clearly told that boys are made of "frogs and snails and puppy dog tails" while girls are made of"sugar and spice and everything nice." The French have the same sexist concept as they explain the words of the nightengale:

He spoke three words in Latin true:
Men are not worth a sow,
And boys are worth as little too,
Of ladies nothing 'twas he knew,
But girls he said are fine, coo coo. (Miller, 68)

It is important that girls, and only girls, be clean and neat. Examples follow:

Little Jenny Flinders,
Sat among the cinders,
Warming her pretty little toes.
Her mother came and caught her,
And whipped her little daughter,
For dirtying her clothes, (Wm. Baring-Gould, 125)

Pussy cat mew jumped over a coal,
And in her best petticoat burnt a great hole.
Poor pussy's weeping, she'll have no more milk,
Until her best petticoat's mended with silk. (

and the three kittens who cried,

Oh, Mother dear,
We greatly fear
Our mittens we have soiled.
What! Soiled your mittens,
You naughty kittens!(Briggs, 212)

The fact that it is always a girl's mother who chastizes her for dirtying or ruining herself may lead one to believe that their may be some sexual warning to girls. Except in the cases where boys are worried about the loss of their "tails," everything that is lost in the English nursery rhyme appears to be lost by girls. Examples follow:

Little Betty Blue
Lost her holiday
What can Little Betty do?(Wm. Baring-Gould, 160)

Lucy Locket lost her pocket.(Wright, 23)

Three little kittens lost their mittens(Briggs, 212)

Little Bo Peep lost her sheep, (Wright, 11)

Boys(such as "Little Jack Horner") are the only ones who ever find things. Whether this concentration on losing as well as dirtying of little girls is a reflection of the female's fear of sexual maturity, or whether it is a mere reflection of the sexist image of the "little girl" made of "sugar and spice," I cannot say. Perhaps even our cultural image of the little girl is a result of concerns about her sexual maturity; and this is worth thinking about because it indicates that sexism may not be an arbitrary placement but a fulfillment of a need.

Numbers

The number three, according to Bettelheim, stands for the total personality; and this is the ego, the superego, and the id. (Bettelheim, 102) Mother Goose abounds with the number three. There are three little kittens, three young rats, three jovial huntsman, three cocks of colebrook, three children sliding on ice, three sisters in a hall, three fiddlers for old King Cole. Knowledge of the Bettelheimian interpretation may be useful in understanding some of these as was done on p. 6 of this paper.

The number seven, according to Bettelheim, stands for ever day of the week and therefore every day of our lives. (Bettelheim, 84) While fairy tales use 7 extensively, Mother Goose uses this number much less. At least as

frequently as the number 7 is used, the particular days of the week are used as in "Monday's Child" or "Solomon Grundy;" or the idea that one does something seven days a week as is "An apple a day sends the doctor away."

My own feeling about the number twelve is that it may stand for the twelve months of the year. One finds cumulative rhymes that go up to twelve such as the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and a "Gaping wide-mouthed waddling frog." One might suspect that these rhymes could be associated with a full year because they are so long for nursery rhymes.

Twenty-four is a number I see more often in Mother Goose than either seven or twelve. It takes four and twenty hairs to make a wig, four and twenty holes are in a skimmer, four and twenty blackbirds baked into a pie, and four and twenty tailors out to kill a snail. It seems that twenty-four must stand for the hours in a day. Recalling that Bettelheim says three stands for the entire personality because it encompasses the ego, id, and superego, we might speculate that twenty-four stands for the entire personality because it encompasses day and night. Bettelheim claims that night stands for one's animal nature and day for one's spiritual nature. (Bettelheim, 294) In addition, rhymes containing twenty-four appear very short as a day would be while longer rhymes containing seven and lengthly rhymes containing twelve are to be found.

We all know that time passes slowest for the youngest and perhaps it is the age level that the rhymes are directed toward that influences the number that is put into the rhyme.

Mother Goose as Children's Folklore

Bruno Bettelheim says that the fairy tales are about "everyman" and therefore characters are often nameless or have descriptive names. Kings and Queens are used as disguises for men and women. (Bettelheim, 40) We see the use in Mother Goose of descriptive names such as "old waman" or "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater. We see the use of Kings and Queens. In addition to using descriptive names for people, Mother Goose often uses animals to symbolize people or facets of people.

Fairy tales, as in all folk lore, presents flat characters because these characters are symbolic. Bettelheim says that the child immediately understands that the fairy tale speaks in symbolism. (Bettelheim, 62) Mother Goose, as has been shown in this paper, also speaks in symbolism and is apparently easily understood by the child.

In addition to namelessness, other vaguenesses such as those of time and place pervade fairy tales to proclaim the tale's symbolic nature. (Bettelheim, 62) Bettelheim tells us that the fairy tale often begins with something distant in name, place, or time to tell the child that he is leaving reality. So does Mother Goose. When one looks at beginnings such as"the man in the moon" and "There once were three cats of Kilkenny," one places the action far away.

It is interesting to note that some scholars claim that can trace the English nursery rhyme back to the 6th c. for that was the time of the reign of "Old King Cole" but I agree with the Opies who contend that just because a rhyme was about an earlier time, doesn't mean that it was written then. It may indeed mean, as Bettelheim might suggest, that it was placed so far away to provide symbolism.

Comparing Dr. Bettelheim's claim that a child is shown in the first sentence of a fairy tale that he is leaving reality, the first lines of Mother Goose rhymes can show an even stronger flee from reality. What could appear to be of greater nonsense to today's child than "Hickory, dickory, dock," "Hey, diddle, diddle," and "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo." Even though the child is not aware that these beginning lines are most likely remnants from an early druid culture, it must appear ancient and foreign to him.

Children's folk literature, all children's literature, is supposed to have hopeful endings. But this doesn't seem to be required of Mother Goose. Many rhymes, particularly the most popular, are short four line verses that don't carry hopeful endings for even the characters symbolic of the child. The Opies tell us that it is the first stanza of the old ballads that became immortalized in the nursery rhyme (Opie. Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, 20),

even though remaining stanzas would bring the story to a happy ending. A prime example of this is "Jack and Jill." S. Baring-Gould said, in 1895, that nothing remains of the long ballad of "Jack and Jill" but the first stanza. (S. Baring-Gould, xii) Jack and Jill appear to symbolize the child as he ventures out into the world (see pp. 11, 11a) as a classic Bettelheim brother/sister theme. Even though the full ballad tells us that Jill rescues Jack and he is eventually patched up as good as new, children seem content with only the verse of falling. Why is the happy ending unnecessary? Perhaps the answer is somewhat related to Bettelheim's interpretation of the importance of the "Thousand and One Nights." Bettelheim says that Scheherazade attains her goal of bringing the king to again trust a woman by telling the king many fairy tales. No single story could have accomplished this for the psychological problems to be handled are much too complex. A large variety of tales are necessary to make an integrated personality. (Bettelheim, 89) Perhaps many different snatches of rhymes make for an integrated personality.

Mother Goose Rhymes and Mother Goose Symbolism in Contemporary Literature & Art

Mother Goose and her symbols can be seen today in works for varying ages. Maurice Sendak uses a picture of oral regression in In the Night Kitchen that is very much like the "baby and I were baked in a pie" image of Mother Goose. Where The Wild Things Are reminds one of the appearance of the animal nature that appears in the night. In popular music, we see Simon and Garfunkel made a hit out of the Mother Goose favorite "Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;" and also use the same symbols that Mother Goose uses for original songs as is seen in there "El Condor Pasa which begins, "I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail." (See sparrow and snail for symbolic meanings)

The most popular and perhaps most influential of contemporary times is The Beatles. It is amazing how close many of the lyrics follow Mother Goose and how closely the themes and symbols of the songs resemble those used in the English nursery rhyme. I examined an album entitled The White Album

because it appeared to have much power. This was the album that Charles Manson devined a message from the Beatles to begin his revolution.(Bugliosi) The following will show lines from Lennon's songs on this album followed by Mother Goose rhyme that seems related:

Song Cry, Baby, Cry	"Cry, baby, cry, Make your mother sigh."
Wm. Baring-Gould, Rhyme 834	"Cry, baby, cry. Put your finger in your eye, And tell your mother it wasn't I."
Song Cry, Baby, Cry.	"The king was in the garden picking flowers for a friend, The queen was in the playroom painting pictures for the children's holiday"
"Sing a song of sixpence"	The king was in the counting house counting out his money, The queen was in the parlour eating bread and honey. (Briggs, 19)
Song Good Night, Good Night	" Good night, sleep tight. Now the sun turns out his light."
"Good Night, Sleep Tight"	"Good night,,sleep tight. Wake up bright in the morning light."(Wm. Baring-Gould, 834)
Song Glass Onion	"I told you about the fool on the hill. I tell you man, he living there still."
"There was an old woman"	"There was an old woman lived under a hill, And if she's not gone, she lives there still."

One also notes similar symbolism. The image of the blackbird, the bird who symbolizes the little boy caught between his animal nature and his desire to soar spiritually in the song Blackbirds:

> Blackbird singing in the dead of night,
> Take these broken wings and learn to fly.
> All your life you were only waiting for this moment to ARISE!

The up and down theme is seen in Helter Sketer:

> When I get to the bottom I go back to the top of the slide,
> Where I stop and I turn, and I go for a ride.

And the dirty little pigs are see in Piggies:

> Have you seen the little piggies crawling in the dirt?
> And for all the little piggies life is getting worse.

These three songs, according to Vincent Bugliosi, were the three songs of Lennon's that ignited Manson's War. (Bugliosi,) The words, "PIG," "RISE," And "HELTER SKELTER" were written in blood because of these three songs. One wonders if there is anything in the content of these lyrics that might fulfill the needs of both Lennon and Manson because biographical studies of these two men show that both had similar backgrounds. Unfortunately, I can't find most of the cards for this section bit I would really like to express this thought anyway. Both Lennon and Manson were born to teenage, run-around mothers, and neither had a father around for the first few years. When Lennon was four and Manson five, each boy was sent to live with an extremely religous sister of the mother's. Both the boys aunts were strict and loving while both mothers were permissive and ignored their sons. When the boys reached eight or nine years old, both returned to live temporarily with their mothers. (See Bugliosi, 136-7 and Davies, Chapter 1) It might be possible that there was some developmental lack in both these men that was fulfilled by something in Mother Goose. Bettelheim explains that when a fairly healthy psyche meets a need-fulfilling fantasy in literature, he is able to use it to fulfill his need but when an unhealthy mind meets the need-fulfilling fantasy in literature he may react destructively. If one considers this possibility, the power in content and symbolism in Mother Goose appears boundless.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined the staying power of Mother Goose. It was my original feeling, after perusing Bruno Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment, that perhaps the content and symbolism of Mother Goose acted to aid in human development. I studied the accepted theory of human development, Bettelheim's theories of how fairy tales aid in this development, and all the nursery rhymes (at different periods of Anglo-American history and at different parts of the world) that I could find. I feel that I have been able to prove that, indeed, nursery rhymes and the symbolism used in nursery rhymes fulfill particular needs of those who respond to them.

Secondly, by close study of the symbolism, I was able to give, at least for me, greater meaning to many of the rhymes I have long wondered at. I now interpret "Hey, diddle, diddle" as follows:

Hey, diddle, diddle (an opening nonsense line which serves to tell the child immediately that this is fantasy)(see p. 37)

The cat and the fiddle(symbolizes maturity)(see pp. 15-6, 32)

The cow jumped over the moon(child recognizes mother is not an unending supply of love and nutriment) (see pp. 2-4)

The little dog laughed to see such sport (the little boy is able to accept this frightening realization)(see pp. 23-4)

And the dish ran away with spoon(further indication that the oral stage is over)(see pp. 2-4)

The following bibliography is meant to serve in capacity of supplying bibliographic information for the footnotes in the paper. It is in no way intended to serve as a source for the most attractive Mother Goose editions, or a full collection of others' opinions as to how the content and symbolism of Mother Goose may contribute to the development of a child's integrated psyche.

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